

1 Joseph W. Cotchett (36324)
2 jcotchett@cpmlegal.com
3 Steven N. Williams (175489)
4 sWilliams@cpmelgal.com
5 Nancy L. Fineman (124970)
6 nfineman@cpmlegal.com
7 Douglas Y. Park (233398)
8 dpark@cpmlegal.com
9 Matthew K. Edling (250940)
10 medling@cpmlegal.com
11 **COTCHETT, PITRE & McCARTHY**
12 840 Malcolm Road, Suite 200
13 Burlingame, CA 94010
14 Telephone: (650) 697-6000
15 Facsimile: (650) 697-0577

Attorneys for Plaintiff and the Proposed Class

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

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STATUTES AND RULES

15 U.S.C.

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OTHER AUTHORITIES

Manual for Complex Litigation, Fourth, §21.11 (2004) 2, 3



I.

INTRODUCTION

The issue presented by this motion is whether it is appropriate to appoint interim lead counsel pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. Rule 23(g). For the reasons set forth herein, Plaintiff Nuts for Candy submits that it is appropriate, and that the motion should be granted.

Defendants Ganz, Inc. and Ganz U.S.A., LLC's (collectively referred to as "Ganz") opposition does not address Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(g)(2)(A) at all, and does not address the manner in which the Cotchett firm will adequately represent the interests of the class, and the fact that appointment of interim lead counsel would accomplish the class action goals of efficiency and economy. Instead, Ganz argues that ruling on Plaintiff Nuts For Candy's motion for appointment of interim lead counsel is premature for two reasons – because the Court has not ruled on Ganz's motion to dismiss and because the appointment of interim lead counsel is an extraordinary step. Neither of these arguments is a basis to deny this motion.

II.

STATEMENT OF RELEVANT FACTS

On June 9, 2008, Plaintiff Nuts for Candy filed a lawsuit in this Court alleging claims of unlawful tying arrangements in violation of the Sherman Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1, and the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 14. Declaration of Matthew K. Edling (“Edling Decl.”) ¶ 1.

On July 11, 2008, Plaintiff Cortes Country Stores, Inc. filed a lawsuit in the Massachusetts District Court alleging that Ganz, Inc. and Ganz U.S.A. LLC participated in an illegal tying arrangement. The allegations in the complaint filed by Plaintiff Cortes Country Stores against Ganz are substantially identical to the allegations in the *Nuts for Candy* Action. Edling Decl. ¶ 2.

On July 22, 2008, Plaintiffs Scott and Sherri Comstock d/b/a The Cheshire Cat and The Spotted Crocodile, filed a lawsuit in the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division against Ganz, Inc. and Ganz U.S.A. LLC. The allegations in that complaint are substantially identical to those in the *Nuts for Candy* Action and in the Cortes Country Stores action. Edling Decl. ¶ 3.



On July 30, 2008, Nuts for Candy filed with the Judicial Panel for Multidistrict Litigation a Motion for Transfer and Consolidation of Related Actions to the Northern District of California Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1407 for Coordinated Consolidated Pretrial Proceedings.

III.

ARGUMENT

A. Given the Number of Pending Competing Suits, Appointment of Interim Class Counsel is Appropriate to Protect the Interests of the Class

In cases where “there are a number of overlapping, duplicative, or competing suits pending in other courts, and some or all of those suits may be consolidated...designation of interim counsel clarifies responsibility for protecting the interests of the class during precertification activities, such as making and responding to motions, conducting any necessary discovery, moving for class certification, and negotiating settlement.” *Manual for Complex Litigation, Fourth*, §21.11 (2004); *Donaldson v. Pharmacia Pension Plan*, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 28607, *2-3 (S.D. Ill. May 10, 2006); see also *In re Cardinal Health, Inc. ERISA Litigation*, 225 F.R.D. 552, 554 (S.D. Ohio 2005). The appropriate inquiry in considering appointment of interim class counsel is to determine who will best represent the interests of the class, and who will best be able to accomplish the class action goals of efficiency and economy. See *Coleman v. General Motors Acceptance Corp.*, 220 F.R.D. 64, 100 (M.D. Tenn. 2004).

B. The Pending Motion to Dismiss is Not a Basis to Deny This Motion

22 Ganz argues that its motion to dismiss should be decided prior to the Court appointing
23 interim class counsel. Ganz provides no legal basis for this assertion. Interim class counsel is
24 routinely appointed prior to ruling on motions to dismiss. As the *Manual for Complex Litigation*
25 makes clear, interim class counsel is needed to ensure that the putative class members are
26 adequately represented in motions that substantially affect their rights. *Id.* at §21.11. A motion
27 to dismiss is certainly such a motion. The pending motion does not foreclose the inquiry into



1 whether appointment of interim lead counsel is appropriate to “fairly and adequately represent
 2 the interests of the class.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(g)(1)(B).

3 **C. The Cotchett Firm Possesses the Experience and Legal Acumen to Best Represent
 4 the Interests of the Class on an Efficient Basis**

5 As set forth in plaintiff’s motion – although unaddressed in Ganz’s opposition – the
 6 factors to be considered in appointing interim lead counsel are:

- 7 (i) the work counsel has done in identifying or investigating potential claims
 in the action;
- 9 (ii) counsel’s experience in handling class actions, other complex litigation,
 and claims of the type asserted in the action;
- 11 (iii) counsel’s knowledge of the applicable law; and
- 12 (iv) the resources counsel will commit to representing the class.

13 Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(g)(1)(A). As detailed in Plaintiff’s motion for appointment, the Cotchett firm
 14 has more than forty years of litigation and trial experience, and is widely recognized as one of the
 15 top trial firms in the United States. The Cotchett firm is more than qualified to serve as Interim
 16 Lead Class Counsel because of its experience in antitrust class actions. The firm has the
 17 resources and staffing to devote to litigation of this type.

18 **D. Application of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 23(g)(3) Is Not Extraordinary**

19 Where there are competing suits pending in other courts designation of interim counsel
 20 insures responsibility for protecting the interests of the class. *Manual for Complex Litigation,*
 21 *Fourth*, §21.11 (2004). This is not an extraordinary step but a customary application of the
 22 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

23 **IV.**

24 **CONCLUSION**

25 Plaintiff’s motion established that the appointment of interim lead counsel in the present
 26 case is appropriate, and defendant has not rebutted that showing. For the foregoing reasons, this
 27 motion should be granted.

1 Dated: August 15, 2008

COTCHETT, PITRE & McCARTHY

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3 By: /s/ Steven N. Williams
4 STEVEN N. WILLIAMS

5 *Attorneys for Plaintiff and the Proposed Class*

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